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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR
THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES
EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR
DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA
Eighth session
Geneva, 5-16 February 1996
Agenda item 5

REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS

Note by the Secretariat

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its Resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992, the General Assembly established a Special Voluntary Fund and a Trust Fund for the INCD process, both administered by the head of the Ad Hoc Secretariat under the authority of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN). These funds were established with a view:

- (a) to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the negotiation process; and
- (b) to supplement limited regular budget resources in financing the negotiating process.

2. Subsequently, Resolution 49/234 of 23 December 1994 adopted by the 49th session of the General Assembly extended the mandate of the two funds for the interim period. It also amended the terms of reference of the INCD Trust Fund to take into consideration the recommendations of the Committee regarding the participation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in its sessions.

3. This document reviews pledges and contributions made to both INCD funds. It also summarizes the Secretariat's utilization of UN regular budget resources during the biennium 1994-1995. It has not been possible to address in this document the regular budget allotment for the biennium 1996-1997 since the budget will not be adopted until the end of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. This issue will therefore be addressed during the ninth session of the Committee.

II. REGULAR BUDGET RESOURCES

4. Regular budget resources are used essentially to cover expenses related to staff, travel, communications and consultancies, as well as standard operating expenses such as maintenance and supplies. Appendix A shows the Secretariat's total regular budget allotment for the biennium 1994-1995 by object of expenditure. Appendix B shows regular budget expenditures during that biennium through 31 October 1995.

5. Various expenditures on staff covered the services of the 5 professional and 4 general service posts carried under the Regular Budget (1 D-2, 1 D-1, 1 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 4 GS).

6. For the biennium 1994-1995 an allotment of US\$ 396,900 was issued for official travel of staff. The bulk of this allotment issued under object expenditure 242 (official travel of staff) was used for the participation of the Secretariat staff in the third, fifth, sixth and seventh sessions of the INCD, held respectively in New York, Paris, New York and Nairobi.

7. Consultancy resources were mainly used for meetings and services of the International Panel of Experts on Desertification. Consultants were also employed in 1995 for the organization and promotion of awareness and information campaigns as well as for ad hoc activities for which the relevant expertise was not available within the Secretariat.

III. TRUST FUND

8. The General Assembly, by its Resolution 47/188, paragraph 13, decided that the "negotiating process shall be funded through existing UN budgetary resources, without negatively affecting its programmed activities, and through voluntary contributions to a Trust Fund established specifically for that purpose for the duration of the negotiations." It also urged "governments, and regional economic integration organizations to contribute generously to the Trust Fund."

9. The situation concerning contributions to the Trust Fund as of 31 November 1995 is shown in Appendix C.

10. As of 31 October 1995, recorded expenditures from the Trust Fund for the biennium 1994-1995 amounted to US\$ 2,653,986. Trust Fund expenditures incurred in support of Secretariat activities are summarized in Appendix D.

11. The Secretariat has established contacts and concluded agreements with several countries, as well as with agencies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations, to enlist their support for ongoing extrabudgetary activities in the following four fields, which the sections below summarize.

- (a) Organization of national awareness seminars
- (b) Subregional consultation processes
- (c) Public information
- (d) Involvement of grass-roots organizations in the implementation of the Convention

Organization of national awareness seminars

12. The Secretariat has continued to facilitate the launching of national awareness seminars concerning the future implementation of the Convention and action during the interim period. By promoting contacts between the various partners working at the national level, these seminars will facilitate the integration into the implementation process of institutions or organizations that may not yet be involved.

13. As stated in Document A/AC.241/41, each seminar can be organized at a cost of roughly US\$ 8,000. In this respect, the Government of Switzerland has contributed US\$ 183,500 for the organization of national seminars in Africa. The Swiss contribution has allowed the launching of the seminars in a first group of twenty-one African countries. The government of Japan has also earmarked US\$ 100,000 of its contribution to the Trust Fund for the organization of these seminars.

14. As presentation and exchange fora, these seminars also provide the opportunity to bring together important actors in civil society, as well as field representatives of donor agencies. With the financial support of the above mentioned countries, the Secretariat has been able to facilitate the holding of these seminars in the following countries during 1995:

April	Cape Verde, Eritrea
May	Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Mauritania
June	Benin, Ethiopia, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Zambia
July	Sudan, Uganda
September	Cote d'Ivoire
October	Guinea
November	Togo, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, South Africa
December	Tunisia

15. The Secretariat is discussing the modalities of financing further awareness seminars with other interested donor countries. If sufficient resources are available, the objective would be to hold such seminars in all countries that request them, in Africa as well as in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Subregional consultation processes

16. The subregional consultation processes take the form of seminars organized by a relevant subregional organization acting as coordinating agency with the support of the Secretariat. They bring together representatives of the governments of a given subregion, donor countries and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to discuss possibilities for the implementation in the subregion of the Convention as well as action during the interim period. They are organized in conjunction with a workshop that gathers media professionals of the same subregion.

17. These seminars and workshops provide all parties involved with an opportunity to increase their level of knowledge about the Convention and to formulate a clear and common view of their obligations and respective roles. These fora also allow participants to be informed of the latest developments regarding the Convention and their impact on activities in the subregion.

18. The Government of Denmark has contributed US\$ 112,900 to the Trust Fund to help organize subregional consultations in East Africa and the Government of Norway US\$ 142,000 for those in Southern Africa. The Government of Spain has contributed US\$ 46,000 toward the cost of the organization of the subregional consultation in North Africa. The Government of Japan has also earmarked US\$ 50,000 of its contribution to the Trust Fund for the organization of the subregional consultation in North Africa. The Government of Canada has provided financing directly to the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) for the West African consultations.

Public information

19. The Secretariat continues to face an increasing demand for information, and is in the process of implementing the information programme launched earlier. It is centred on the production and distribution of materials giving balanced information on the various dimensions of the Convention, in easily accessible language. The target audiences include national policy makers, development practitioners, economic and business leaders, NGO's, journalists and the public in general.

20. These materials comprise the following, some of which are packaged in a Convention kit. At this stage the Secretariat is overseeing the production of the Convention kit in all UN languages.

- (a) The Convention text in an attractive booklet format, with an accompanying explanatory leaflet, in Arabic, English, French, Spanish, and soon in Chinese and Russian
- (b) A simplified version of the Convention in a booklet entitled "Down to Earth", in Arabic, English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and later in other languages including the languages most widely spoken in affected areas
- (c) Ten fact sheets covering the main aspects of the Convention and providing policy makers and other target audiences with greater access to high quality information in Arabic, English, French, Spanish and soon in Russian and Chinese
- (d) A slide presentation to assist in promotional activities for the ratification and implementation of the Convention
- (e) A "home page" on the Internet World Wide Web containing INCD documents and other materials related to the Convention
- (f) Azimuth video productions on combating desertification including a newly filmed one in China: From the Great Wall to the Green Wall

21. In initiating its public information programme, the Secretariat utilized significant assistance from the governments of Denmark, Japan and Spain, as well as from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Denmark contributed through the Trust Fund for the production of the Convention Kit and Convention Booklet. Switzerland, IFAD and UNEP contributed directly to the Centre for Our Common Future, a Geneva-based international NGO, which supervised the writing, editing and production of the simplified version of the Convention in English. UNEP's Information Unit for Conventions also supervised and co-financed the initial production of the Convention booklet and explanatory leaflet in English, French and Arabic. It also made possible the initiation of a World Wide Web home page on desertification.

Grass-roots involvement in the implementation of the Convention

22. "IFAD has agreed to contribute US\$ 400,000 to the INCD Trust Fund. The Memorandum of Understanding prepared to this end has already been signed. As indicated below, part of this contribution will be used for the recruitment of one general service staff member. The balance is earmarked for facilitation and coordination of activities related to the involvement of affected communities in the implementation of the Convention, as well as for promotion of initiatives for dissemination of information on implementation. In addition, the Secretariat is in contact with several governments and organizations to obtain financing for NGO participation in INCD sessions. In this regard, the government of Japan has agreed to earmark US\$ 80,000 for the organization of an Asian NGO conference on desertification and US\$ 50,000 for the participation of NGO's in the sessions of the Committee". The government of Japan has also put forward US\$20,000 to support NGO projects aimed at raising awareness of the Convention in their region and to enhance NGO capacity in the field of implementation of the Convention. In addition, a pledge of US\$70,000 was received from the government of Switzerland to support the participation of representatives from the NGO community in the eighth session of the Committee.

23. In light of the discussion above and given the current status of the Trust Fund, the INCD may wish to call upon potential donors to contribute to the Fund and give further guidance to the Executive Secretary concerning its future use.

IV. SPECIAL VOLUNTARY FUND

24. The current status of contributions received for the Special Voluntary Fund is shown in Appendix E. After provision for support costs and operating reserve, a balance of approximately US\$452,500 remains available in that Fund. This amount represents the balance from the seventh session, the balance available as operating cash reserve and funds from recent contributions. In allocating the remaining funds, priority will continue to be given to least developed countries affected by drought and desertification. The Secretariat will circulate, during the session, as an addendum to this document, a list of countries whose participation has been financed through the Fund.

25. There are now two budget scenarios for the Special Voluntary Fund, depending on the level of contributions. The first would fund the travel of at least one representative from affected developing countries to two INCD meetings per year, with two representatives from affected least developed countries. The second, assuming insufficient contribution levels, would cover only one representative from least developed affected countries.

26. In light of the above and given the current status of Special Voluntary Fund, the INCD may wish to call upon potential donors to contribute to the Fund and give further guidance to the Executive Secretary concerning its future use.

V. SECRETARIAT STAFFING SITUATION

27. The staffing situation of the Secretariat, as of 31 October 1995, is shown in Appendix F. It does not include consultants or temporary staff hired to assist the Secretariat during sessions of the Committee.

28. Contractual arrangements relating to the positions covered by the Trust Fund continue to be of a short-term nature owing to the uncertainty of funding. The extension of the contracts of six of the seven staff members currently financed from extrabudgetary resources depends on the timely receipt of contributions.

29. The following information is of relevance to the staffing situation of the Secretariat:

- (a) FAO has extended the services of an environmental lawyer to assist the Secretariat on a part-time basis.
- (b) IFAD has approved a contribution of US\$ 400,000 to the Trust Fund. Part of this contribution will be earmarked for the recruitment of a general service staff member, as indicated in paragraph 22 above.
- (c) WMO has seconded one professional and one general service staff member to the Secretariat.
- (d) UNEP has earmarked US\$ 50,000 of its most recent contribution to the Trust Fund for general temporary assistance in the Secretariat.
- (e) Italy has recently finalized its internal procedures for the secondment of a junior professional officer to the Secretariat, who will work for one year in the field of media and communications.
- (f) One temporary staff member has been recruited using Trust Fund resources to assist professional staff members in their daily work.
- (g) Canada, Switzerland and Sweden continue to fund the services of one professional staff member each, as shown in Appendix F.

30. Administrative support to the Secretariat is provided by a Geneva based administrative unit of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) consisting of one professional officer and two general service staff. The unit, which functions within the framework of the Executive Office of the Department located at United Nations Headquarters, New York, also serves the Interim Secretariat of the Convention on Climate Change.

APPENDIX A

TOTAL REGULAR BUDGET ALLOTMENTS FOR 1994 AND 1995
BY OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE
(US DOLLARS)

OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE	TOTAL ALLOTMENT 1994-1995*	TOTAL ALLOTMENT 1994**	TOTAL ALLOTMENT 1995
010 Established Posts	1,574,900.00	835,500.00	739,400.00
040 Consultants	699,200.00	537,700.00	161,500.00
050 Overtime & night differential	10,300.00	4,900.00	5,400.00
100 Common staff costs	511,100.00	277,900.00	233,200.00
113 Representation allowance	1,200.00	600.00	600.00
242 Other official travel of staff	396,900.00	123,500.00	273,400.00
430 Rental of furniture and equipment	33,500.00	13,600.00	19,900.00
440 Communications	118,100.00	37,400.00	80,700.00
451 Official Functions	6,300.00	4,000.00	2,300.00
490 Miscellaneous Services	12,600.00	10,100.00	2,500.00
500 Supplies and materials	16,000.00	10,200.00	5,800.00
610 Office furniture and equipment	9,000.00	8,300.00	700.00
620 Data processing equipment	39,500.00	31,700.00	7,800.00
TOTAL	3,428,600.00	1,895,400.00	1,533,200.00

* As recorded in 31.10.1995 allotment report

** As recorded in final 1994 allotment report

APPENDIX B

TOTAL EXPENDITURES INCURRED IN 1994 AND 1995 IN THE REGULAR BUDGET
BY OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE
(US DOLLARS)

OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE	TOTAL EXPENDITURES JAN.-DEC. 1994 AND JAN.-OCT. 1995	TOTAL EXPENDITURES JAN.-DEC. 1994*	TOTAL EXPENDITURES JAN.-OCT. 1995**
010 Established Posts	1,652,011.06	913,536.40	738,474.66
040 Consultants	660,126.61	480,671.08	179,455.53
050 Overtime & night differential	3,366.80	3,366.80	-
100 Common staff costs	698,517.31	408,162.79	290,354.52
113 Representation allowance	1,186.21	736.21	450.00
242 Other official travel of staff	365,001.87	130,547.51	234,454.36
430 Rental of furniture and equipment	28,034.58	15,841.75	12,192.83
440 Communications	115,577.90	84,259.12	31,318.78
451 Official Functions	634.23	-	634.23
490 Miscellaneous Services	9,566.93	8,427.05	1,139.88
500 Supplies and materials	5,790.24	1,637.15	4,153.09
610 Office furniture and equipment	1,659.47	711.24	948.23
620 Data processing equipment	36,593.60	28,371.29	8,222.31
TOTAL	3,578,066.81	2,076,268.39	1,501,798.42

* As recorded in final 1994 allotment report

** As recorded in 31.10.1995 allotment report

APPENDIX C

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TRUST FUND RECEIVED AS OF 30 NOVEMBER 1995
(US DOLLARS)

Donor country/Organisation	1993	1994	1995	Total
Australia	34,915	86,160	-	121,075
Canada	134,982	134,381	5,344	274,707
Cyprus	1,000	-	-	1,000
Denmark	-	200,000	244,410	444,410
Finland	-	89,522	-	89,522
France	105,542	15,842	-	121,384
Greece	-	5,000	-	5,000
Israel	-	-	3,158	3,158
Japan	-	123,300	505,330	628,630
Kenya	-	5,000	-	5,000
Netherlands	555,139	-	-	555,139
Norway	187,971	62,978	142,154	393,103
Sweden	-	128,287	134,000	262,287
Switzerland	125,310	468,884	449,500	1,043,694
Tunisia	-	2,000	-	2,000
United States of America	200,000	100,000	-	300,000
European Commission	-	-	64,875	64,875
World Meteorological Organization	-	-	16,304	16,304
UNEP	300,000	50,000	80,000	430,000
TOTAL	1,644,859	1,471,354	1,645,075	4,761,288

APPENDIX D

TRUST FUND EXPENDITURES FOR 1994-1995
AS OF 31 OCTOBER 1995

(US DOLLARS)

Object code	Description	Expenditure
030	General temporary assistance	1,227,899
050	Overtime	7,650
060	Ad hoc expert groups	36,792
080	Personal service contract	16,107
210	Travel of participants	302,425
220	Travel of staff to official meeting	28,820
242	Other official travel of staff	314,450
300	Contractual services	97,709
400	General operating expenses	20,945
800	Fellowships/grants/contributions	601,189
Total		2,653,986

APPENDIX E

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL VOLUNTARY FUND RECEIVED AS OF 30 NOVEMBER 1995
(US DOLLARS)

Donor country/Organisation	1993	1994	1995	Total
Australia	-	65,735	-	65,735
Austria	-	10,000	-	10,000
Benin	-	1,000	-	1,000
Canada	77,662	-	42,257	119,919
Denmark	199,985	-	-	199,985
France	103,999	64,540	-	168,539
Germany	185,827	-	-	185,827
Greece	-	5,000	-	5,000
Ireland	-	71,500	16,391	87,891
Italy	90,744	-	-	90,744
Japan	-	300,000	200,000	500,000
Korea	-	50,000	-	50,000
Norway	199,985	226,359	-	426,344
Panama	-	-	500	500
Portugal	-	15,000	-	15,000
Spain	42,024	19,985	26,479	88,488
Sweden	262,280	-	150,128	412,408
Switzerland	66,013	-	-	66,013
United Kingdom	111,727	-	-	111,727
United States of America	50,000	-	-	50,000
European Commission	-	-	64,875	64,875
TOTAL	1,390,246	829,119	500,630	2,719,995

APPENDIX F				
CCD SECRETARIAT STAFFING SITUATION AS OF 30 NOVEMBER 1995				
Category	Regular Budget	Extrabudgetary resources		Total
D-2	1	0		1
D-1/L-6	1	0		1
P-5/L-5	1	1	Financed by Canada	4
		1	Financed by Switzerland	
		1	Financed by WMO	
P-4/L-4	1	0		1
P-3/L-3	1	1	Financed by Sweden	2
P-1/L-1	0	1		1
Total D/P & L	5	5		10
General service	4	1	Financed by WMO	6
		1		
Grand total	9	7		16